



REPORT
ON THE
HEALTH OF THE BOROUGH
OF
GREAT YARMOUTH,
FOR THE YEAR 1879.

BY
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*TO THE GREAT YARMOUTH URBAN
SANITARY AUTHORITY.*

GENTLEMEN,

It is with some considerable amount of pleasure I present you with this, my report upon the health of the Borough for the year 1879.

The death rate, you will notice, is exceptionally low. The Registrar General gives it for the United Kingdom as 20·7 per 1000, and in two of his quarterly reports he distinctly points to the low death rate of Yarmouth. I am of opinion the Registrar General really views the Yarmouth mortality in too favourable a light, for he calculates it upon "the Yarmouth registration district, and the Gorleston sub-district of the Mutford registration district." Now as this latter sub-district contains several rural parishes, with a population of about 2000, which are not within the Borough of Great Yarmouth, their inclusion tends to lighten the Yarmouth death rate. It would be much better to dissociate the rural district from Gorleston, and to make the Gorleston sub-district co-terminous with the limits of the Borough. You have no authority, Sanitary or otherwise, over the rural parishes, and therefore it would be as well were they not introduced into calculations which it is to the utmost importance to you to have as correct as possible. I would further suggest that the locality known as Cobholm Island, be severed from the Yarmouth northern sub-district and added to the Gorleston sub-district to which it more rightly belongs, being merely an extension northward of the hamlet of Southtown, and

from which it has not any visible division ; whilst its position on the Suffolk side of the Yare argues against it counting its vital statistics with a locality in the County of Norfolk, and from which it is separated by a wide river. I urge this matter, as the present arrangements do not give death rates so truly indicative of the salubrity of the districts they represent, as they ought to do.

In the following calculations I have omitted the rural districts above alluded to, and have taken the figures relating to the Borough only.

SECTION I. POPULATION.

I calculate there were living within the Borough of Great Yarmouth, in the middle of 1879, 48,500 persons. These figures exhibit an increase of 1000 upon those given for 1878.

In proportion to the population, the largest increase has been at Gorleston, and the least in the north district.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

During the 52 weeks ending Saturday, January 3rd, 1880, there were registered by the Registrars within the Borough 1568 births and 830 deaths ; thus giving an addition to the population of 738 persons.

The Birth-rate for the year was 32·32 per 1000.

The Death-rate ,, 17·11 ,,

The rate of Increase ,, 15·21 ,,

Eighty-seven of the 1568 births, or 5·5 *per cent.* were illegitimate.

Eighteen illegitimate infants of less than a year old, died during the year, which indicates a death-rate of 20·6 *per cent. of those born* ; whilst 213 infants of corresponding

age, but of legitimate birth, also died, giving a death-rate of 14·3 *per cent. of those born*. In other words, 6·3 *per cent.* more illegitimate infants died than those born in wedlock.

The subjoined table gives particulars relating to the three Registration districts within the Borough, and the four quarterly periods of the year.

BIRTHS.							DEATHS.							Increase per 1,000
DISTRICT.	13 Weeks ending.					Per 1,000	13 Weeks ending.					Per 1,000		
	5th April.	5th July.	4th Oct.	3rd Jan.	TOTAL.		5th April.	5th July.	4th Oct.	3rd Jan.	TOTAL.			
NORTHERN ... Est. Pop. 21,667	190	166	137	176	669	30·87	111	92	77	104	384	17·72	13·15	
SOUTHERN ... Est. Pop. 17,753	159	133	129	144	565	32·82	78	77	91	66	312	17·57	14·25	
GORLESTON and SOUTHTOWN. Est. Pop. 9,080.	84	76	72	102	334	36·78	37	21	34	42	134	14·75	22·03	

The deaths in the Northern district include 57 at the Workhouse and 18 inquests.

Those in the Southern district include 8 at the Public Hospital, 27 at the Naval Asylum, and 21 inquests.

Those in Gorleston and Southtown include 10 inquests.

There were several deaths partially or wholly attributed to violence, not the subjects of any of the above-mentioned inquests, but were registered as ordinary deaths, upon the certificates of the medical men who had attended the cases.

The cardinal figures for the last five years are here given in juxta-position, for the sake of comparison.

	1875.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.
No. of Births	1434	1490	1490	1553	1568
No. of Deaths	1036	920	900	1057	830
Birth-rate	31·8	32·53	31·93	32·69	32·32
Death-rate	23·02	20·01	19·29	22·25	17·11
Rate of Increase	8·7	12·45	12·64	10·44	15·21
Zymotic Deaths	201	155	109	147	79
Ditto, Death-rate	4·6	3·3	2·3	3·07	1·60

PARTICULARS OF THE DEATHS.

The table on the opposite page, which has been prepared by direction of the Local Government Board, classifies the ages of the persons who died last year, and indicates the causes of the deaths of many of them.

The causes specified are those more usually influenced by the sanitary surroundings of the deceased, and to which the attention of the Sanitary Authority should be more immediately directed.

The Infant Mortality still continues high, although somewhat less than last year. The *per centage* of deaths of infants *under one year* of age to the *registered births* was 13·5. In speaking of infant mortality in his report for the third quarter of last year, the Registrar General points to Yarmouth, as having an excessive infantile death rate. Many of the causes of this waste of infant life I mentioned in my last year's report. There is yet another cause one is bound to recognise, notwithstanding its loathsomeness. Every medical man, who has seen much of private practice amongst the lower classes, well knows that very many of the cases of Tabes, Marasmus, Atrophy, Debility and such like, owe their origin to constitutional

TABLE OF DEATHS

During the Year 1879, in the Urban Sanitary District of GREAT YARMOUTH, classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities, and showing also the Population of such Localities, and the Births therein during the year.

I. Names of Localities (being Parishes, Groups of Parishes, Townships, Wards, or other areas of known population) ad- opted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being ex- cluded.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		Registered Births.	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.							MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS IN PERSONS UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.																	
	Census 1871.	Esti- mated to middle of 1879.		At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 60	60 and upwards.		Measles.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Croup (not "spasmodic".)	Whooping Cough.	Con. Fevers		Diarrhea and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Erysipelas.	Pyæmia.	Puerperal Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	Other Diseases.
																	Eritic or Typhoid.	Other or Doubtful.										
NORTHERN { DISTRICT }	19,661	21,667	669	384	74	35	18	14	105	138	Under 5	4	4	2	2	2	2	0	9	0	1	0		2	20	0	1	62
											5 upwds.	0	4	0	0	0	2	3	3	1	0	1		32	21	32	13	161
SOUTHERN { DISTRICT }	15,505	17,753	565	312	90	42	18	15	85	62	Under 5	3	5	1	2	4	0	0	14		1		0	0	23	0	2	78
											5 upwds.	0	4	4	1	0	2	1	2		2		1	34	15	11	13	89
GORLESTON { DISTRICT }	6,653	9,080	334	134	49	12	9	3	23	38	Under 5				2				3	0				0	12	0	2	41
											5 upwds.				0				1	1				7	7	5	5	48
TOTALS.....	41,819	48,500	1568	830	213	89	45	32	213	238	Under 5	7	9	3	6	6	2	0	26	0	2	0	0	2	55	0	5	181
											5 upwds.	0	8	4	1	0	4	4	6	2	2	1	1	73	43	48	31	298

taint. I regret to say such diseases are very common in Yarmouth, and I firmly believe the operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, if applied to this town, would do a great deal, in the course of a few years, towards abating this scourge. Healthier children would be born, and the stamina of future generations would be much improved. This town is a sea and fishing port of considerable importance as well as a Military Depôt, and would, in my opinion, benefit by the operation of the Acts.

ZYMOTIC DEATHS.

I am glad to be able to report that the total number of deaths due to Zymotic causes were less than those in any of the four preceding years. Altogether they amounted to 79, which gives a rate of 1·6 per 1000.

MEASLES shows a marked decline from last year. The epidemic 1878 left with us, gradually dwindled away and finally left us in the Autumn.

SCARLET FEVER deaths, I am sorry to say, were rather more numerous this year than last, and there are indications of a still further increase in the present year.

Until the registration of *illness* of Infectious disease is insisted upon, it is impossible for your officers to get early intimation of cases of this character. The death certificate is so frequently the first information one has of the occurrence of Fever, that I quite despair of the voluntary reporting of Fever cases, by medical men and private individuals, ever being done so completely, as to avoid the necessity of compelling, by Act of Parliament, the information being rendered, immediately upon the outbreak of the disease by those having charge the patient. Sanitary effort is comparatively of little avail when once a disease has fastened on a locality.

The removal or isolation of first cases, very early in the course of the disease is the most efficient of sanitary measures.

Of the DIPHTHERIA deaths three occurred in one family and a most lamentable instance of poisoning by sewer gas did they prove to be. The horrid sewer gas had free access to the house and was undoubtedly the cause of all the mischief.

In my report for 1876 and 77, I considered at some length the arrangement and condition of *the public main sewers* of the Borough. I am aware that something has been done, since then, towards ventilating and washing them, but this so sparingly that very little good has come of it; indeed the sewers retain so much filth, that the very ventilators which have been put down, are complained of as nuisances. Unless the sewer contents are completely cleansed out, and plenty of ventilating tubes, properly cowed, placed on every sewer, the surface ventilators must continue to annoy. Permit me to commend to your attention my remarks upon our sewers contained in the report above referred to.

WHOOPIING COUGH and FEVER continued in the Town, but neither of them numbered so many victims as they did in the year previous.

DIARRHŒA, for which Yarmouth has of late years been notorious, again heads the Zymotic list. Thirty-two deaths from this cause are not so many as we have lately been accustomed to, but yet they are 32 too many. The Registrar General says in his report for the third quarter of the year, that "Yarmouth again showed a relatively "large excess of diarrhœa fatality, the rate being equal to "1.5 per 1000."

In my former reports I have said so much about the causes of Diarrhœa, and more particularly of that which affects infants, that a repetition here now is unnecessary, but inasmuch as an atmosphere, loaded with noxious effluvia, very much induces this disease, I may at this point refer to the present arrangements for *the removal of night soil*. The scheme which you devised three years ago, whereby one person contracted for the frequent removal of the night soil from every privy in the town, has not succeeded. The night soil men most shamefully neglect some of the poorer inhabitants, and I would recommend you to reconsider the whole question. Contingent upon this should be the entire removal of the "muck holes." I believe when the arrangements above alluded to were made, these horrid places were only allowed to continue for a short time, until the manure then accumulated there, should have been all disposed of; and in lieu of them the Contractor was allowed to lease, on favourable terms, a portion of the North Denes for the storage of any manure he could not immediately dispose of. I regret to find the "muck holes" still exist in all their nastiness, and apparently no more night soil is carried to the North Dene depôt than is required to cultivate the land.

I would advise you, in making new arrangements for the night soil removal, to consider of the first importance its removal daily to a considerable distance out of the town, and that no depôt, of however temporary a character, shall be allowed nearer the town, than the one you designed on the North Denes; and that the immense accumulation of night soil at present at the muck holes shall be removed forthwith, and the holes filled up with clean sand.

The daily removal of night soil could be more easily accomplished by river than by road, for although the North part of the town is within easy carting distance of the North Dene depôt, the South part of the town is at so great a distance, and so much time is wasted going to and fro, that not nearly so much night soil can be fetched from the South end as from the North end in the same given time.

I am sure it would be much better to remove the night soil in barges up the river, direct to the agricultural districts where the soil is most valuable. My idea is to work the town in six sections, one of which is to be thoroughly cleansed every morning, and all the filth collected, to be shot into a wherry lying in the river, opposite the section then being worked. Immediately upon the barge being filled, or the work ended, the soil should be covered over with proper hatches, and the vessel moved up the river to her country destination. Were the whole of the contractor's staff employed in the manner I have indicated upon a sixth part of the town each morning, there is no reason why every privy in Yarmouth should not be emptied once a week. I feel certain the greater price the manure would fetch at the country depôt, and the less expense of carting in the town, would more than compensate the contractor for the outlay he might be put to in obtaining barges.

SECTION II.

SANITARY WORK.

NUISANCE REMOVAL.

Total number attended to by the Inspectors	...	603
Remedied by the Inspectors' notice only	...	343
Referred to the Town Clerk to take proceedings		260

(a)	For cleansing drains, cesspools, &c. ...	57
(b)	For the closing of impure wells, and for the laying on of the Company's water }	54
(c)	For the repair or reconstruction of privies ...	37
(d)	To channel and make up roads ...	34
(e)	For paving and repairing slaughter houses	23
(f)	For constructing new drains	16
(g)	For the erection of troughing	13
(h)	To construct new sewer	12
(i)	For repairing cellar doors, whitewashing and cleansing buildings, &c., &c. }	8
(j)	For discontinuing keeping pigs, fowls, &c. and for cleansing foul yards, &c. }	6

No very great sanitary work, beyond that of ordinary routine, has engaged your attention during the year.

The most noteworthy, probably, was the opening of a public Cemetery for Gorleston. Everyone who has seen the place, is pleased with the pretty quiet little God's-acre you have formed. 'Tis on some of the highest and driest ground in the parish, and well removed from the busy turmoil of man's daily work.

Greater attention has been given by your Sanitary Committee to the plans of new buildings, that have from time to time been placed before it for approval. Your bye-laws in this behalf have been more rigidly enforced.

The regulating of Dairys, Cowsheds, and Milkshops has also had your attention, and a useful set of bye-laws been prepared.

You have also continued your good work of closing all impure drinking-water wells that you have had knowledge of.

Several Milksellers have been prosecuted for selling adulterated milk, indeed so thoroughly has the law been administered in this particular, that of the last batch of samples submitted to the analyst all were reported genuine.

You have also given some attention to the Slaughter houses and ordered certain alterations with the view of improving them in their present situation, I earnestly hope that ere long their entire removal from within the town will be decided on.

I beg to thank you for the courteous consideration you have ever given to my advice and suggestions. My acknowledgements are also due to all your sanitary officers for the valuable assistance I have had from them.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN BATELY,

Medical Officer of Health.